

Judges 13:1-11 - Thursday, January 10th, 2013

(1) Again the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years. - Right out of the shoot here in verse one, we have several lessons that can be learned, chief of which is, what I call, the peril of prosperity. - By that I mean, the Israelites have once again did that which is evil in the sight of the Lord after having many years of peace and prosperity. - It's at this juncture in their sin cycle that the Lord will have to deliver them into the hand of the Philistines for what ends up being forty years.

- This is probably as good of a time as any to revisit whom the Philistines really were this because of the confusion and deception in our day. - It's important to know that the ancient Philistines are not synonymous with the "so-called" modern day "Palestinians." That is truly a myth. - The fact of the matter is the Philistines are extinct, in that they no longer exist, and it's evidenced by the absence of coinage and language.

One of the best books I've ever read concerning the Palestinian Myth, is by Ramon Bennett, titled, "Philistine The Great Deception." Here's a quote from his outstanding work, "In 130 A.D. the Romans renamed Jerusalem "Aelia Capitolina", after the emperor Aelias Hadrianus and the god "Jupiter Capitolinus". ...The Romans kept Aelia Capitolina as their name for Jerusalem, and renamed the Promised Land "Syria Palaestina". ...The renaming of the land was an overt effort to eradicate the Jewish connection. ...After the Muslim conquest of Palaestina in the 7th century A.D., the name Aelia Capitolina gradually faded from use. And in due process of time Palaestina, the Latin form of Philistia-the land of the ancient Philistines-was Anglicized into Palestine..."

Philistine The Great Deception, Ramon Bennett pp. 129-130

(2) Now there was a certain man from Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah; and his wife *was* barren and had no children. (3) And the Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son.

- Here we're introduced to the father and mother of who'll arguably become the most well known Judges of Israel, none other than Samson. - This because of Samson's supernatural strength, which he was famous for, and his exploits with Delilah, which he was sadly, infamous for. - Perhaps it's for this reason that God would raise up Samson at this time, as forty years in slavery to the Philistines was the longest period.

One commentator writes how that, "Samson was truly a man from his times. He was a study in contrasts, a man of great strengths and great weaknesses. In this, he was a picture of Israel's history - of great highs and lows. ...Samson is also an important example of unfulfilled potential. Though he did great things for God, it is staggering to consider what he *might* have done and been for God."

- It's interesting to note that this is yet another Christophany, in that Jesus Himself is the one Who appears to, and speaks to Manoah's wife. - It's also worthy of noting that she joins a unique constituency of godly women, all of whom shared the same curse of the barren womb. - Let me hasten to say, that this curse was never a Biblical curse, rather it was a cultural curse, in the sense that this was the thought then.

- I suppose not much has changed since then, in that the Christian culture today sort of treats infertility as a sign of God's curse on someone. - As I'm sure most of you know I speak from experience given that my wife and I went through ten years of infertility, before having a son. - It was during that time that well-intentioned Christian brothers and sisters would suggest to us that it was because of some sin in our lives.

- Be that as it may, if you are one who knows of a couple who, in their infertility, are unable to have children, please be encouraging to them. - If you are that one, who's in this dark passage of the night, that anguish of the soul, unable to have children, please know that God knows. - Furthermore, not only do you not know what God knows, you don't know what God is going to do in and through what's happened to you.

(4) Now therefore, please be careful not to drink wine or *similar* drink, and not to eat anything unclean. (5) For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

- Here we're told that she is told, not to drink wine, or eat anything unclean, by virtue of how her son shall be a Nazirite from the womb. - Being a Nazirite is not at all the same as being a Nazarene. Jesus was called a Nazarene because He was from the town of Nazareth. - Actually, Jesus dwelling in Nazareth would ultimately be fulfilled along with over three hundred prophecies concerning His first coming

Matthew 2:23 NKJV And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

- So, to be a Nazarene means that you were from the city of Nazareth, on the other hand, to be a Nazirite means that you had taken a vow. - In our study through the book of Numbers we became acquainted with what it meant for a man or woman who would take this Nazirite vow. - Thus, I think we'd be grossly remiss were we not to go back to the book of Numbers, chapter six, beginning from verse one to verse eight.

Numbers 6:1-8 NKJV Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, (2) "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, (3) he shall separate himself from wine and *similar* drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from *similar* drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. (4) All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin. (5) 'All the days of the vow of his separation no razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. *Then* he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. (6) All the days that he separates himself to the LORD he shall not go near a dead body. (7) He shall not make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God *is* on his head. (8) All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.

- One would take the vow of a Nazirite supremely for the purpose of separation, consecration, and dedication both, for and to, the Lord.
 - Those in scripture, in addition to Samson here in Judges, who took the vow of the Nazirite were John the Baptist, and the Apostle Paul.
 - The specific requirements for those taking the vow of the Nazirite were really quite involved back then, and they even application to us now.
 - First, wine, and anything that is similar to it, was explicitly forbidden because it would be a source of intoxication for the one taking this vow.
 - Second, grape juice, fresh grapes or raisins were forbidden as well. One thought is that this speaks symbolically to the denying of self.
 - Third, even the eating of anything produced by the grapevine or from the seed to the skin was forbidden. Again, this is a denying of self.
 - Then, we sort of go from the inward, with the drinking of wine, to the outward, with the growing of the hair. I for one am interested in this.
 - We're also told those who would take the Nazirite vow were not to shave or even cut their hair, rather, they were to allow it to grow long.
 - The thought is that this would be an outward demonstration of the inward consecration, so the others would know they've taken the vow.
 - This is interesting because it would have a built-in accountability of sorts such that everyone would be watching you and what you did.
 - In addition to not drinking their wine or cutting their hair, those taking this vow were not to go near a dead body lest they become unclean.
 - This carries with it the idea of not coming into contact with anything that would represent the curse of sin, which was evidenced by death.
 - It's interesting to note that, as it relates to Samson, he had broken the vow by drinking, touching a dead carcass, and having his haircut.
 - It was only because of his final act of breaking the Nazirite vow when Delilah cut his hair off that he had ultimately lost all of his strength.
 - It's believed this was because growing the hair was the most public sign of the vow and as such would bring the most reproach to the Lord.
 - I'm of the belief it's for this reason that we have a seemingly nebulous detail recorded in the narrative and as such it's not so easily noticed.
 - I'm speaking of how that the Lord tells her that the son from her womb will only "begin" to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.
 - This would seem to indicate the Lord is foretelling how Samson will fall and fail as a deliverer of Israel vis-à-vis the breaking of this vow.
 - While Samson would begin the work of delivering Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, it would be King David who would finish the work.
 - I think there's a lesson here by way of personal application, in that this speaks to how it is that sometimes someone else finishes the work.
 - In other words, God may call us to start a work, but call someone else to finish that work, and it's not necessarily because we have failed.
- (6) So the woman came and told her husband, saying, "A Man of God came to me, and His countenance *was* like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I did not ask Him where He *was* from, and He did not tell me His name. (7) And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.' "
- This is interesting to me for a number of reasons not the least of which is it suggests she's already anticipating her husbands response.
 - The reason I say that is because she's beats him to it when she answers two questions that the text doesn't have him asking her about.
 - Namely, what was his name, and where was he from. The reason I point this out is this is a common dynamic in the marriage relationship.
 - Being as how women process information with both sides of their brains, and men only one side of their brains, you get different outcomes.
 - By way of example, a husband and wife, both of whom were involved in the very same conversation, will have a very different take on it.
 - It's humorous and yet insightful that Manoah knows that the only thing he wants to know about the conversation was both who and where.

This reminds me of that humorous story that illustrates the difference between men and women's take on a conversation. It goes like this, "Let's say a guy named Roger is attracted to a woman named Elaine. He asks her out to a movie; she accepts; they have a pretty good time. A few nights later he asks her out to dinner, and again they enjoy themselves. They continue to see each other regularly, and after a while neither one of them is seeing anybody else. And then, one evening when they're driving home, a thought occurs to Elaine, and, without really thinking, she says it aloud: "Do you realize that, as of tonight, we've been seeing each other for exactly six months?" And then there is silence in the car. To Elaine, it seems like a very loud silence. She thinks to herself: Oh my, I wonder if it bothers him that I said that. Maybe he's been feeling confined by our relationship; maybe he thinks I'm trying to push him into some kind of obligation that he doesn't want, or isn't sure of. And Roger is thinking: Ha, Six months. And Elaine is thinking: But, hey, I'm not so sure I want this kind of relationship, either. Sometimes I wish I had a little more space, so I'd have time to think about whether I really want us to keep going the way we are, moving steadily toward . . . I mean, where are we going? Are we just going to keep seeing each other at this level of intimacy? Are we heading toward marriage? Toward children? Toward a lifetime together? Am I ready for that level of commitment? Do I really even know this person? And Roger is thinking: . . . so that means it was . . . let's see . . . February when we started going out, which was right after I had the car at the dealer's, which means . . . lemme check the odometer . . . Whoa! I am way overdue for an oil change here. And Elaine is thinking: He's upset. I can see it on his face. Maybe I'm reading this completely wrong. Maybe he wants more from our relationship, more intimacy, more commitment; maybe he has sensed -- even before I sensed it -- that I was feeling some reservations. Yes, I bet that's it. That's why he's so reluctant to say anything about his own feelings. He's afraid of being rejected. And Roger is thinking: And I'm gonna have them look at the transmission again. I don't care what those morons say, it's still not shifting right. And they better not try to blame it on the cold weather this time. What cold weather? It's 87 degrees out, and this thing is shifting like a garbage truck, and I paid those incompetent thieves \$600. And Elaine is thinking: He's angry. And I don't blame him. I'd be angry, too. I feel so guilty, putting him through this, but I can't help the way I feel. I'm just not sure. And Roger is thinking: They'll probably say it's only a 90- day warranty. That's exactly what they're gonna say, those scoundrels. And Elaine is thinking: maybe I'm just too idealistic, waiting for a knight to come riding up on his white horse, when I'm sitting right next to a perfectly good person, a person I enjoy being with, a person I truly do care about, a person who seems to truly care about me. A person who is in pain because of my self-centered, schoolgirl romantic fantasy. And Roger is thinking: Warranty? They want a warranty? I'll give them a warranty. I'll take their warranty and stick it in their ear for all I care.